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Butler. The appropriation for suppressing
hostilities in Florida. 1840

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SPEECH

OF

W. O. BUTLER, OF KENTUCKY,

IN

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,

IN

REPLY TO MR. BIDDLE AND MR. HUNT,

UPON THE

APPROPRIATION FOR SUPPRESSING HOSTILITIES IN FLORIDA,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 11, 1840.

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SPEECH.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That I have not occupied this floor sooner, is an evidence of the reluctance I feel, in occupying it at all; a reluctance which is greatly increased from the reflection that the session is drawing to a close, and that I can hope to say nothing likely to compensate the country for the time I shall necessarily occupy. This consideration would certainly induce me to decline saying any thing on the present occasion, were I not satisfied, that the session is to end, as it began, in speech-making.

Be this as it may, sir, I have now undergone what all will admit to be a reasonable noviciate in silence, and intend as brief a discussion of the Florida war question as I may find convenient. That this war is beginning to excite a deep, and a thrilling interest in the community, is not a matter of surprise; it has desolated our frontiers with a most unsparing hand for years; and although it in no degree threatens the general safety of the nation, it is but too well calculated to appeal to the sympathy of every heart not locked up against the voice of sorrow. It is moreover, sir, a war whose termination still lies hid, far in the dark inscrutable future. Like every other transaction of the times, this war, has been seized on by the Opposition party, in and out of this House, for the purpose of being moulded into political capital. It has been roundly asserted, that its operations have been such, as to reflect indelible disgrace upon the administration under which it has been carried on. As a friend, and a supporter of that administration, I have felt myself called upon to examine into the truth of this charge; and after having done so, I take it upon myself to say, in the presence of those who have made it, that it has no foundation in truth. I intend to re-examine it, in the presence of this committee, where the various laws, and most of the facts in relation to it, are within our reach; and where the touch-stone of truth may be readily applied. I congratulate the country, sir, that this hour has at last arrived. I congratulate the Opposition, that they are no longer compelled to yelp and snap at the shadow of this war; that they may now do that, as a matter of right, which they have heretofore only attempted by way of stealth; and I now call upon them one and all, to make good their charges; not by round and bold assertion, but by proof and argument. It would have evinced much more confidence in the truth and justice of their charges, had they have waited for this hour. It would have been much more creditable to themselves, and infinitely more just to all concerned, had they have imitated the notable example of Tam O'Shanter's wife, and nursed their wrath until the present time. But, I am aware, that this Opposition never condescends to act upon any but high and prudential considerations; I, therefore, take it for granted that some such consideration must have influenced their course in relation to this war. I presume, sir, they found their patriot wrath too hot for nursing, and that they have been simply hoisting their safety-valves in advance, as the only means to prevent explosion. Certain it is, sir, that we have had many and most portentous sounds from their escape-pipes in this hall. I congratulate

them that their long agony is now over, and that they may work off their surplus steam at their leisure, and in the natural way.

Before I proceed, however, to an examination into the operations of this war, permit me to reply to the gentlemen who have preceded me as to the alleged causes which induced it. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. OGLE], in his celebrated "clear the kitchen speech," told us that it was brought on by the infamous conduct of the Government in swindling these Indians out of their lands; and the gentleman from New York [Mr. HUNT] added to this, a charge in relation to the wife of Osceola, which is appropriately registered in the Abolition Almanac of the present year. I admit that these gentlemen are quite as near the truth as is usual in these party times; they are only one remove from it. It is not that these Indians have been cheated out of their lands by the Government (for I am well convinced a fairer treaty never was made with an Indian tribe), but it is to this charge, falsely made, and widely circulated, and particularly among those Indians themselves, that this war is to be attributed, more than to any other cause. Unfortunately, for the honor, the peace, and the prosperity of the country, there is, and ever has been, a party among us (not a large one I trust, sir), who never yet was known to approve of any one act of their own Government; who never yet was found acting with their own country, either in peace or in war. The same party which held back the arms of our gallant fathers in the Revolutionary struggle; which hung a dead weight upon our eagle's wings in the last war; and which is now busy in sowing the seeds of disunion throughout the land. This party, sir, has made its appearance among us at different periods of our history, and in various guises, but ever in that guise best calculated to strike at the honor and security of the nation. For some time past it has been carrying on a most insidious warfare, alternately and conjointly under the red and black banner. It has taken under its holy keeping the red man of the wild, and the southern slave, and has been inciting the one to rebellion, and both to war, by every means in its power. And, yet, so strange a thing is man, that the members of this same party, meekly fold their arms and call upon the world to say whether they are not the true, nay the peculiar followers of the Prince of peace. That there may be among them some blind, deluded zealots, who fondly dream they are engaged in the service of the Most High, while they are lighting the torch of civil discord in the land, and bathing it in blood, is barely possible; but that their leaders, and many of their rank and file, will, in the end, be found to be either the hired or the willing tools of foreign powers, striking at the integrity of this Union, I have many and strong reasons to apprehend. Crowned heads throughout the world begin to sit tremblingly on their thrones. The spirit of inquiry is abroad in every land; liberal principles are every where on the rapid march, and our free institutions afford the only light held out for their guidance. Put out that light, and liberty is lost to the world! The problem of man's capacity for self-government is fatally solved, and the feudal ages come back upon us with all their gloom and all their chains. It is not then strange that crowned heads should seize upon the only means in their power, to remove the only obstacle in their way. America, true to herself, may laugh at the world in arms; to divide and conquer us is the only hope. And I repeat it, sir, this saintly brood of hypocrites, these exclusive friends of the red man and the black, but who would neither shed their blood nor spend

their money for the salvation of both races, are, in my opinion, designed as the entering wedge for the rending asunder this great, this glorious, this holy confederacy; cemented together by all that is sacred in the past, by all that is worth living for in time to come.

As a further pretence for intermeddling with Indian affairs, it has been said that one of the chief purposes of the late administration was the destruction of the Indian race; and we have been invoked by the orators, and the poets, and the papers of a party, both foreign and domestic, to unite with them in weeping over the fate of a once great and potent nation—now a feeble and oppressed tribe, cheated out of their lands, and driven from the graves of their fathers into bitter exile by the iron hand of tyranny. Notwithstanding they were encouraged to sell their lands, and to emigrate, as the only means to save them from utter extermination; and, notwithstanding, while remaining among us, they are daily dipping their insatiate hands in the innocent blood of our women and our children: for them this party has no sympathy; it is treasured up for our enemies alone.

It is true, Mr. Chairman, when the gallant old man who was at the head of the late administration saw Florida in flames, and the hearthstones of her peaceful and unoffending citizens drenched with their own blood, that he flew to their assistance, and saved them from destruction. It is also true, that, in doing so, he shed much Indian blood; ay, sir, and shed it without remorse. But that his, or the policy of the Government, in purchasing the Indian lands, and removing them beyond the Mississippi, has a tendency, or was designed, to destroy them, is utterly untrue. I repeat it, sir, nothing else can save them from speedy extermination. All history, and tradition, and experience, attest the fact that these two races cannot live in close contiguity with each other; that the contact has still been fatal to the Indian race. True it is, sir, that portions of that race, like the strong man in the temple, have often brought a common ruin upon their own and the heads of all within their reach; but, as a nation, they have been compelled, with diminished numbers, to plunge deeper and deeper in their genial wild, leaving behind them smoking ruins and a bloody trail.

What, let me ask, sir, would be the fate of the Seminole tribe, in a few years, hemmed in, and pressed on all sides as it is, by a daily increasing white population? It would be that of a belted tree, putting forth its sickly leaves for a season, dropping its sapless branches, one by one, and speedily mingling with the dust. The reason is a most obvious one, our customs are at continual war with each other: the Indian lives by the chase—lives mainly on the forest game. The farms and fences of the white man circumscribe and limit the range of the deer and the elk, and the hum of civilization frightens them away. The Indian follows of his own accord, or is compelled by the whites, after having turned his idle arms upon those who have broken in upon his habits, without having changed his nature. Give him his native wild—the lofty mountain and the deep dark dell; the rushing river and the quiet lake; give him the rifle and the forest game: you give him all he requires—all he is capable of enjoying. You leave untouched and uncontaminated all that is worth preserving in his nature; and I acknowledge he has many fine and lofty traits of character. Take his weapons from his hand, and replace them with the plough and the hoe, and you make him a tame dispirited slave, or a bitter and an unrelenting enemy. If this be true, sir, was it not a wise and a humane policy, to give them a distant country of their own, where

they may preserve and enjoy their own proper and peculiar customs, unchecked and uncontrolled by the warring usages of civilization? That the condition of those who have complied with their treaty stipulations, and removed beyond the Mississippi, is greatly improved, we are not only told by their own agents, but by the concurrent testimony of all who have visited them in their new homes. I have deemed it proper to say thus much in defence of the policy of the Government, and in refutation of the unjust and illiberal charges made against the late administration. But I am well aware, sir, that the fate of the Indian has but little weight with those who are affecting to weep over it. It is used merely as a mask, to cloak another and a much more important measure—one which it is not quite prudent to proclaim on the house-tops. They would be content to witness a war of extermination between the Indians and whites of the South, so it did not reach their borders, or touch their purses, provided it should prevent the settlement of Florida by slaveholders, and its formation into slave States. That, sir, is the key to the whole mystery. Florida, in its present condition, is too well suited to their purposes to be lost without a struggle, which costs them nothing, however much blood and misery it may cost others. Florida, in its present condition, is the fit, the natural, and the well-selected theatre for abolition operations; the only one on which it can ever hope even to commence its nefarious schemes; and the Florida war, its first, its natural, and its bitter fruit. Look at it, sir, surrounded on all sides by slaves and slaveholders, occupied by a savage tribe, easily excited to war, owning many slaves, and having among them many free negroes, in daily communication with those of the whites, at all times disposed to excite them to rebel against, and desert from their owners; and to secrete and protect them when they do so, of their own accord. Stretching far toward the Bahamas, and reaching almost to Jamaica, lately a slave state, and now a scene of manumitted misery—owned by a foreign and a rival power, united and affiliated with the Abolitionists in our own country—it is a most convenient spot for all the numerous agents of this society, to meet and complot in safety, against the peace and security of the American people. Do not imagine, sir, for a moment, that considerations of so vital a character as these have been overlooked or disregarded, by either the people of Florida or the Abolition party. That they are both thrillingly alive to their true condition, will be seen from an extract taken from the Anti-slavery Almanac of the present year. The article from which this extract is made is under the following appropriate head: "Will you admit Florida as a slave State?" After denouncing the Government and the war in the most reckless and unmeasured terms, and quoting from the Louisville Journal, in support of their charges, they proceed to give the reasons why the people of Florida desire the removal of the Indians.

"At a public meeting of the citizens of Tallahassee and vicinity, June 8, 1839, it was 'unanimously resolved, that the Seminole Indians and the inhabitants of Florida CANNOT MAINTAIN PEACE AND LIVE IN THE SAME COUNTRY, and if any treaty shall be ratified, locating these Indians in Florida, *it will be a paper treaty only.*' They also resolved, 'That the peninsula of Florida is the last place in the limits of the United States where the Indians should be permitted to remain, for obvious reasons:' 1 and 2, 'They are accessible to our enemies, and would be guides to them in war;' 3, 'If located in Florida, all the runaway slaves will find refuge and protection with them;' 4, 'The contiguity of emancipated colored people of the West Indies, would, in a war with some foreign power, place Florida, and, in fact, the whole of our Southern States in jeopardy.'"

What are those reasons? The people of Florida wished the removal of the Indians because their lives and their property were in imminent and constant danger from their contiguity; and these are adopted by the Abolitionists as insuperable objections against their removal. I confess, sir, they are of the most satisfactory and conclusive character. It is quite natural that the people of Florida should feel a deep solicitude in the preservation of their lives and their property. But the Abolitionists have decreed that they shall loose their slaves, even at the expense of life itself. I know there are some of that party who will recoil with much seeming horror at the very shadow of such a catastrophe. Yes, sir, there are men in the world who will coolly and quietly lay a train that they, and all others who pretend to think at all, must know will ignite of itself or be fired by the hands of another, and who, when the thunder of the explosion bursts upon them, will exclaim against the wickedness of the deed, and thank Heaven that they at least were free from such a sin. This, sir, is the case with many. But there are others who have laid aside even this thin and flimsy robe of caution and hypocrisy, and who come out boldly, and in print, and tell us they have weighed the whole matter and are prepared to carry out their vile schemes, even at the expense of the Union itself. Let every American read the following extract from their proceedings, and then let any man who prizes his character and standing as a patriot dare defend them:

"W. L. Garrison, from the Business Committee, reported a resolution declaring that, as Abolitionists, we are bound to carry out our principles, no matter at what expense to our sect or party, to the Constitution, or to the Union."

This paragraph wants no comment. I will not even say of its author, as the venerable gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. ADAMS) once said of a distinguished colleague (Mr. WEBSTER) who in debate said he would not vote for a certain war measure, then under consideration, even if the enemy were then thundering at the Capitol, "that he had but one more step to take, and that was to join the enemy." I will not do the author of that paragraph the injustice to doubt that he has already taken that important step.

No one, not even the Abolitionists themselves, can deny that the course openly pursued by that party has a direct tendency to excite discontent among both the Indians and the negroes. Have they not both had their supposed wrongs and oppressions depicted to them with all the force and fervor which ingenuity and falsehood united could command; and what other method could they have resorted to more likely to produce the results which have followed? Does any one doubt that such means, acting on such bodies of ignorant and illiterate men, even if no such evil was designed, could fail to excite both Indians and negroes to revenge; and is it not equally natural that two such classes of men, living in the same region and in habits of daily intercourse, should unite together for the purpose of effecting a common redress. That they did so unite before the commencement of the war, and have continued to act in perfect concert, I will now show you from the report of Major General Jesup, who was then engaged in the prosecution of that war; from page 10, I make the following extract:

"Having been apprized, by prisoners taken in the preceding campaign, of an arrangement entered into previous to the war between the Indians and the slaves, that, so soon as hostilities should commence, the latter were to join them, and take up arms, I informed the Indians that all their negroes must be separated from them and sent out of the country."

Again, in a letter from Volusia, he says :

"This, you may be assured, is a negro, not an Indian war, and if it be not speedily put down the South will feel the effects of it on their slave population before the end of the next season."—*Ex. Doc. 78, 3d vol., 2d session, 25th Congress.*

An intelligent gentleman, now in this city, long and still an inhabitant of Florida, in a note to me, says: "That the Indians were instigated to a violation of the treaty at Payne's landing by the negroes among them, there is no doubt." As a proof that the Abolitionists have been instigating them to this course, and that foreigners have been aiding them in it, the same gentleman says: "During the course of the war, a communication existed, with boats, between the Bahamas, where some of the fugitive slaves had transported themselves for greater security; and a brig has been running, under the charge of a devoted patron of free negroes, from St. John's to St. Domingo." That the people in Florida are alive to these facts will be seen from the following extract from the *Floridian* :

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in East Florida to his friend in New York.

"If you observe the papers, you will see what is doing in Congress toward our admission as a State. We have two parties—one for, and one against it. One is for a division, to form ultimately two States; the other, to come in whole immediately. In the present and prospective state of things, it is decidedly better to come in as one State; for, if the Abolitionists get the ascendancy, we can never come in. The Union would be dissolved in the attempt; and dissolved it assuredly will be, if they increase; and, with their increase, persevere in the incendiary efforts we see them daily making to excite discontent and revolt among our slaves. The modes by which they essay to do this are, some of them, as base, and baser, than any thing else that can be named, excepting always, and for ever, the cause they are engaged in. I could particularize these, but shall content myself with the one fact of their making instruments of negroes, who have (perhaps by the generosity of their former owners) been emancipated, and are suffered to remain among us. The intercourse with these free negroes is not difficult. By means of other free negroes occasionally touching at our ports, and finding ingress to our towns and cities; these are bribed to the work, and furnished with incendiary tracts, artfully contrived, for the furtherance of their hellish purposes."

The following extracts from their constitution will show their plan of operations. Among the means to be resorted to, are the following: "To open correspondence with the Abolitionists throughout the world, and encourage them in the prosecution of their objects." And again: "That our friends, both white and colored, in Canada, the West Indies, South America, and other countries, be affectionately invited to form auxiliary societies, and contribute to the funds of this society." Do you think, sir, all this brotherly love has been thrown away? No, sir; the Indians and the negroes have been appealed to, and they have gone to war; the islands have been invoked in the most fraternal terms, and the islands have lent their aid. What impression these facts may have upon others, I am not prepared to say. If any shall still doubt that the spirit of abolition has been one of the causes which produced, and is now protracting, this war, I leave them to the enjoyment of that opinion; convinced, as I am, that time is maturing and multiplying facts that will force even the willing skeptic to become an unwilling believer.

I proceed, in the next place, sir, to an examination of the manner in which this war has been conducted. I have before said that the Opposition in this House has charged the operations of the Florida war to be such as to reflect indelible disgrace upon the administration under which it has been carried on. But, strange to tell, no part of that foul attaint is to at-

tach either to the generals who conducted the various campaigns, or to the soldiers who fought the different battles. It would not be quite politic, at this interesting conjuncture, to assail so numerous and so influential a body of men, that might rouse the honest indignation of their numerous friends, and of the country at large. That gentlemen have no intention of doing, and I acquit them from any such design. Had success have crowned our arms, had victory have perched on our standard, who would have worn the plucked laurels? By the united voice of the world, they would have graced the brows of our generals and their companions in arms. But, sir, victory and defeat are the very opposites of each other; and their effects should, of course, be of a corresponding character. Each new victory is but a fresh blast from the trumpet of the nation's fame; and, therefore, we join in the all hail to our friends who have won it. But, sir, it is most desirable and convenient to find a scape-goat for those same friends when overtaken by defeat and disaster; and if that scape-goat should chance to prove an enemy, or a political opponent, it is looked upon as a God-send, that, not to profit by, would be condemned by all as a species of political impiety.

Each year, Mr. Chairman, seems to demand a fresh victim. Last year the Secretary of the Treasury was singled out for party immolation. I need not tell you, sir, how signal a failure it proved; I need not remind you with what recoil that measure fell on the heads of those who attempted to use it. Where, now, sir, is the mighty product of that mighty effort? where is that celebrated report which cost its authors so much labor and the nation so much money? I mean, sir, the Swartwout report. Last year it was the political text-book of the Whig party, and was flourished from all the stumps and horse-blocks in the country; where is it now, sir? it must have lost favor even with its friends; it has rarely been alluded to even in this House; it has scarcely raised a bubble or a ripple in this great boiling caldron into which every one is throwing his bitterest things—

“Liver of mi-believing Jew,
Gall of goat, and sprigs of yew.”

Sir, it has been solemnly tried and fairly condemned by the American people, and from their verdict there is no appeal. Unwarned by the past, another victim is bound to the horns of the political altar. The Secretary of War is singled out for the sacrifice. Sir, it requires no Chaldean knowledge of the stars to foretell his doom. A child might cast his horoscope. Mr. Chairman, it was said of yore that the holiness of the altar sanctified the offering—that was true of one altar only, the altar of the Most High. Some altars are so base in themselves as to desecrate all that touches them. Such, mainly, are the altars of man; peculiarly such, sir, are the party altars of this day. I much fear that no acceptable incense can ever rise from them. I much fear that when the smoke of the sacrifice is over, and the fervor of the worshipper subsided, when conscience and posterity come to sit in honest judgment on our best acts, when the gilding and drapery are torn off, and our motives laid bare, that all which we are now offering, under the specious and holy names of patriotism and country, will be found to be little more than sordid ministerings to party and to self. I had thought there was still left one common ground on which even the parties in this House might meet, and, for a time, lay down their weapons of party strife. I had thought that when our banner was on the breeze, and our eagle spreading his wings for the stoop, that one spirit, the spirit of our

fathers, would be in every breast. Nor will I, even now, permit myself to doubt that were this a war of foreign aggression, or one calculated to rouse the spirit of the nation, by endangering its liberty, that we would all prove true in the trial hour.

But the Florida war has been treated as a matter of trivial moment. A few naked and wandering savages are said to have sacked our borders and foiled our armies; and the Secretary of War is held responsible for all the blood and all the treasure that have been lavished on that war. I will not stop now, sir, to cast up the merchant part of this charge; I will not, when speaking of the blood of my countrymen, pause to weigh it against gold. This is a proper, but a separate subject for inquiry. Let it be made. Submit the accounts and expenditures of this war to a proper committee, and let us have a full examination; not an *ex parte* one, upon select items culled out for present use, and at the close of the session, when it is well known that no one has the time or the inclination to examine them. We are now examining the operations of the war; not the quartermasters' or the commissaries' accounts. Show me that the Secretary of War has been remiss or derelict in his duty; show me that he has betrayed or neglected the high trust committed to his keeping—that he has suffered the blood of Florida to flow when he had the power to close her wounds; and I will aid you in the infliction of any punishment you may dare to name—I will aid you in branding him with a stigma that shall resist the effacing fingers of time for ever. But, before we proceed to condemn or to punish him, let us understand distinctly the offences with which he is charged; and let him have a chance to defend himself, at least by his friends on this floor. This, however, sir, is no part of Whig tactics. They have an instinctive horror of every thing like specification; it has a tendency to cramp their genius and unfeather the wings of their imagination. Sweeping charges and bold and bitter denunciations are much more easily made, and much more difficult of detection; and, therefore, generally resorted to. But, sir, I feel myself prepared to meet gentlemen, even on their own ground, and to satisfy all, who do not wish to close their eyes against truth, that even these general charges cannot be true, and exist only in the fertile imagination of those by whom they have been made. Have gentlemen condescended to inquire into the duties of the Secretary of War; the means that have been placed at his disposal by Government, and the manner in which he has employed them? Have they examined into the character and number of the enemy we have been contending with? And, above all, have they duly weighed the character of the climate, and the impracticable nature of the country which has been the theatre of this war? If they have, and know enough of the science of war, to appreciate and apply such information, then they are, in some degree, qualified to commence the delicate and difficult task of military criticism; then they are, in some degree at least, prepared to do justice to the Secretary of War, and to the unfortunate army who are throwing away their lives and reputations in that most unfortunate war. And let me tell you, sir, if you proceed to condemn the one or the other, without making these essential inquiries, you are but acting the part of common stabbers in the dark, and just as likely to kill the brave man as the coward; and let me also tell you that the eyes of the American people are upon you, a just and intelligent and a liberal people, one with whom success is not the only test of merit; and if there is a

wretch on earth more contemptible in their eyes than all others, it is he who, not having courage to win laurels of his own, shall stretch forth his timid trembling hand to pilfer them from a brave man's brow.

What, then, are the legitimate and appropriate duties of the Secretary of War? and in what manner has he discharged those duties? His is a general superintendence over all that belongs to the science and the art of war; to see that the best and most appropriate means, whether of men or munitions, are furnished for carrying it on. Where it consists of many parts, and is waged in different regions, he is necessarily compelled to give a general outline of the whole, so as to insure the harmonious action of the different parts; but when the war is confined to a single, and that a wild and unexplored region, as Florida, all detail is necessarily left to the skill and discretion of the commanding general. On the selection of a general for such a service much depends, and for that selection, the Secretary is properly responsible. In which of these important duties has the Secretary of War failed? and who, if any, is the delinquent Secretary?—for there have been several Secretaries, since the commencement of this disastrous war.

It is far from my intention to enter into a minute account of the Florida war; this would require more time and more labor than I am willing to bestow upon the subject at this time. My main object is to defend the Government from what I believe to be a most unjust and wanton attack. There may have been neglect, there may have been mismanagement, in many of the operations of this war. It would, indeed, be strange, sir, were it otherwise, when we consider the materials that have necessarily been employed in its prosecution. If the commanding generals have been properly furnished with men and munitions, they, and they alone, are responsible for the proper use of them. In making the inquiry, which I propose, I shall necessarily be compelled to speak of the officers of the army, who have been engaged in this war; and, in doing so, I may find it necessary in some degree to compare their merits, or more properly, their fitness for this service. If so, it will not be to detract from them. That justice may be done to all, and injustice to none, it is essential to keep in view, not only the officers connected with the different periods of the war, but also the particular administration then in power.

As General Clinch, who commanded the first, and General Scott the second campaign, have made a common cause against the Government, I will first state their charge, and then proceed to meet it. In justice to these gentlemen, permit me, however, to say that the commencement of this war was well calculated to operate prejudicially on those who had charge of it. It was not until various generals and numerous forces had failed to bring it to an end, that we began to appreciate the many difficulties to be encountered, and the true causes of failure. That there was a general disappointment throughout the country, from the President down, when campaign after campaign ended without closing this war, is certain. The consequence was, that a court of inquiry was ordered to investigate the causes which prevented General Scott from ending the war. Instead of defending himself by assigning the true reasons, General Scott, in turn, attacked the Government. His interrogatory to Clinch, a witness on his trial, and the answer of Clinch, place the subject in a clear and distinct point of view; and I will beg leave to read them to the committee:

"*Question by the court.* What were the causes, in your opinion, that prevented the subjection of the hostile Seminoles in the campaign conducted by Major General Scott in Florida, in 1836?"

"*Answer.* In reply to that question I am compelled to state, that I am of the opinion that the failures of and the disasters attending the operations in Florida, were mainly to be attributed to the want of energy and military forecast in the late head of the War Department; and in failing to order a larger force, and a greater quantity of military supplies, &c., into that country in 1835, and early in the year 1836. In illustration of this opinion, and to show that the late Secretary of War was not entirely uninformed as to the state of things in Florida, I beg leave to submit to the court extracts from several letters addressed to the adjutant general of the army by the officer then commanding in Florida. When, at last, the late honorable Secretary awoke from his dreams of political preferment, and turned his attention to bleeding and suffering Florida, it was too late, owing to the peculiar nature of the country, to effect a great deal before the hot and sickly months set in; hence, in a great measure, may be attributed the failure, as it has been termed, of the campaign conducted by Major General Scott in Florida.

"[The extracts alluded to in this answer were here read to the court, and accompany these proceedings, document No. 151.]"

Now, sir, here is a distinct charge, and of an important character. Let us examine into its truth. The witness, General Clinch, was the officer in command at the time of the alleged delinquency. That he was an intelligent and a meritorious officer, every way worthy of the high trust, none will deny. The Government relied upon him with implicit confidence as to what was proper and necessary to be done, and the force and other means requisite for the service. Was not this a just and proper reliance? Who was half so well qualified to give all the necessary information as General Clinch, who was immediately on the scene of action, and had special charge of the military operations in Florida? Certainly no one. I will now proceed to show you that all the requisitions of General Clinch were met, and more than met, by the War Department, as soon as they were made. If I do this, I shall feel satisfied that I have succeeded in warding from the Administration all pretence of censure, let it fall where it may. That the requisitions of General Clinch were so met, will manifestly appear from the Adjutant General's report, containing a summary of all the transactions of that period between General Clinch and the War Department, from which I will read the following extract:

"In consequence of the state of affairs as reported by the commanding officer of Fort King on the 27th October, 1834, and the officer of the Commissary's department charged with duties connected with the removal of the Indians, and also on the report of the Indian agent, it was deemed necessary to increase the military force stationed in Florida. Accordingly, orders, dated November 24, were issued, directing three companies of artillery to take post at Fort Brooke, Tampa bay, and the company stationed at Fort Marion, St. Augustine, to join the garrison at Fort King, then consisting of one company of infantry. The same order assigned Brevet Brigadier General Clinch to the command of the troops in Florida, an officer of much experience, and being well acquainted with the Indian habits and character. He was also required to co-operate with the Indian agent in all proper measures relative to the contemplated removal of the Seminole Indians.

"On a requisition of General Clinch, received in February, 1835, for six additional companies to strengthen his command, four companies of artillery, under Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Fanning, of the 4th regiment, were, on the 14th of February, 1835, ordered from Fort Monroe to Fort King, with authority, at the same time, to draw in the company of infantry at Key West. The number of companies in Florida was now increased to ten; of which number six were concentrated at Fort King, three at Fort Brooke, as before stated, and one stationed at Key West.

"On the 12th of October, Lieutenant Harris, of the artillery, disbursing agent for the Seminoles, recommended that the force in Florida should be increased; but as no additional requisition for that purpose had been received from General Clinch, it was not considered proper to direct this measure. On the 15th of the month, the two companies of artillery stationed at Forts Morgan and Pickens, near Mobile and Pensacola, were placed under his orders.

"On the 21st of October a letter, dated the 8th, was received from General Clinch, in which he suggested the propriety of being authorized to call into the service one hundred and fifty mounted volunteers, to aid in the removal of the Indians and to suppress any difficulties which might occur. But as this force was required to aid in the removal of the Indians and to prevent

difficulties which were anticipated, and not to repress hostilities which had commenced, or which were then impending, General Clinch was informed, in answer, on the 22d of October, that there was no appropriation authorizing the measure, and that the President, under existing circumstances, did not consider that the case came under the constitutional power to call into service an additional force for the defence of the country. But he was authorized to order two more companies, viz, those at Forts Wood and Pike, to join him, which, with the two companies placed at his disposal on the 5th of October, made four companies of regular troops, in lieu of the mounted men. On the 3d of the same month orders were given by the Navy Department to Commodore Dallas, to direct one of the vessels of the squadron to co-operate with General Clinch in his endeavors to effect the removal of the Seminoles.

"In a letter received on the 31st of October, General Clinch requested that three companies of regular troops might be added to his command. He was apprized, however, by previous orders, that four had already been placed at his disposal.

"In his communication from St. Augustine, dated 29th November, received on the 9th of December, General Clinch reported that, should he find it necessary for the protection of the frontier settlements, he would assume the responsibility of calling out at least one hundred mounted men, believing that the measure would be sanctioned by the President and Secretary of War. This approval was communicated to him on the same day; and, in addition to it, a letter was addressed to the Governor of Florida, requesting him to place at the disposal of General Clinch any militia force that officer might require. Of this, General Clinch was informed. He was also informed that, at the request of General Hernandez, orders would be given, through the Ordnance Department, to issue five hundred muskets and the necessary equipments to the militia."

A few comments on this report will place this matter in a light that none can fail to see and understand it. It is true that General Clinch required six companies in February, 1835, and that five only were then placed at his disposal. I will first explain the reason why this company was at that moment withheld, and then show that a change in our relations with the Seminoles rendered it unnecessary. It will be recollected that our regular army is but a small one; that we have an immense frontier to guard, and much public property requiring, at all times, to be protected; that we had a prospect of an immediate war with the Creek Indians, five times as numerous as the Seminoles; and, more than all these, we had strong reason to apprehend a war with France. Of course, it was both prudent and proper to hold what regular force we had in the best possible condition and at the most suitable points, to meet whatever contingencies might arise. These would have been sufficient reasons to justify the Government in sending the five instead of the six companies required by General Clinch, even had that number have been necessary. But, sir, I will now proceed to prove to you that General Clinch had as many men as he wanted, and that he himself thought so. You will remark, in the extract from the Adjutant General's report, that the company stationed at Key West was one of those placed at the disposal of General Clinch on the 14th July, 1835, and this company was not called for until about nine months afterward; for it was one of the two companies under the command of Major Dade in the battle of the 28th of December, 1835; and then on the march to join the command of General Clinch for the first time. Now, sir, if it be true that the Government is justly chargeable with neglect in failing to supply General Clinch with an adequate force, how can that gentleman answer to the country for his failure to use even the force he had? But I will not, for a moment, leave him in so awkward a condition. He did not call for the Key West company because he had enough without it. A new treaty was made with the Indians, settling all pretence of difficulty and putting an end to all prospects of a war, on the 3d of April, 1835. It is in the following words:

"We, the undersigned, chiefs and sub-chiefs of the Seminole tribe of Indians, do hereby, for ourselves and for our people, voluntarily acknowledge the validity of the treaty between the United States and the Seminole nation of Indians, concluded at Payne's Landing, on the

Ocklawaha river, on the ninth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two; and the treaty between the United States and the Seminole nation of Indians, made and concluded at Fort Gibson, on the twenty-eighth day of March, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three, by Montfort Stokes, Henry L. Ellsworth, and John H. Schermerhorn, commissioners on the part of the United States, and the delegates of the said Seminole nation of Indians, on the part of the said nation; and we, the said chiefs and sub-chiefs, do, for ourselves and our people, freely and fully assent to the above-recited articles in all their provisions. Done in council at the Seminole agency, this twenty-third day of April, eighteen hundred and thirty-five."

Now, sir, had the war have commenced previous to this treaty, and could it be shown that the failure to furnish one company that General Clinch had required operated prejudicially on that war, I will own, to that extent, the Government might have been censurable, but for the fact that it was thought the troops were more wanted in other places. General Clinch and his friends choose to forget this treaty, and still recur to his first demand for troops, although the necessity for complying with that demand had been destroyed by the formation of the treaty. If war was expected previously no war came, and no injury whatever ensued. Let us, then, take a fresh start from the date of this treaty, and see why it is that the Government was not prepared to prosecute this war when it actually came, which was on the 28th of December, 1835. Simply, sir, because the Indians, to all appearance, were preparing to emigrate peaceably, and there was no apprehension of a war. General Call, the then Governor of Florida, in a letter to Secretary Cass, says: "This war came with the suddenness of light." There were but two occurrences from April, the date of the treaty, until the middle of November, to create the slightest apprehension of such an event. In June there was a quarrel between some four or five whites and about as many Indians, which resulted in the death of one of the Indians and the wounding of three of the whites. The Indians were promptly surrendered by the tribe, and dismissed by the civil authorities. On the 11th of August Private Dalton was killed by the Indians, in relation to which I make the following extract from General Clinch's letter of the 12th of August:

"The causes of this murder are stated to have been a determination, on the part of the Indians, to revenge the death of a relation of theirs who was killed in a rencontre between the whites and Indians, which I reported to the general-in-chief in my letter of the 30th June last. The Indians now say that, having accomplished their purposes of revenge by the murder of a white man, they are now satisfied."

No intimation is here given that there is the least danger of a war up to this time. On the 3d of the same month Lieutenant Harris, the disbursing agent, in a letter to Adjutant General Jones, says: "The present prospects for emigrating are promising." It will be seen, from an examination of the Adjutant General's report, above referred to, that, from the time of the treaty, in April, until the commencement of the war, in December, General Clinch had more force placed at his disposal than he required, by one company of regulars and five hundred Florida militia. How, then, can either General Clinch or General Scott say that the Secretary of War was in fault for not having provided more efficiently for the war before its commencement? Had General Scott have been in command all the time instead of General Clinch, would he have been better prepared? How would he have made preparation? By making requisitions for men and means, as a matter of course. Why, then, if they were necessary, did not General Clinch demand them? I leave these gentlemen to settle this delicate matter between them as they may find it most convenient, and turn my attention to General Scott, and to an examination of the course pursu-

ed by the Government in relation to him and his command in Florida. General Scott was in the city of Washington when the report of Clinch's and Dade's battles reached there, which was between the 16th and 20th of February, 1836. On the first intelligence General Eustace, then in Charleston, South Carolina, was ordered to join General Clinch with reinforcements; but information soon after arrived which induced the belief that a junction between the Creeks and Seminoles was contemplated, and that it might become necessary to call into the service such a number of militia as would amount to a major general's command, in which event the command would have devolved on him, as General Clinch is only a general by brevet. It was, therefore, deemed proper to order General Scott to assume the command, not that any fault had been found with General Clinch. On the contrary, all that had been done by him at that time was much to his credit; and, as I have shown, it was the intention of the Government to have retained him in command after his battle until the second report, of which I have before spoken, reached Washington. Neither General Clinch, nor any other officer in the service, had a right to take umbrage at being placed under the command of General Scott under such circumstances.

To show that General Scott had unlimited control as to the proper means for carrying on this war, I will read the following extract from the order placing him in command of the Florida army, dated on the 21st January, 1836:

"It is impracticable here to prescribe the amount of force which ought to be carried into the field; that must depend upon the actual circumstances which you may find existing when you reach the scene of operations. It is, of course, desirable that no unnecessary force should be employed, as the expense may thereby be greatly increased; still, I would not have you hesitate for a moment in calling out such a number of the militia as will enable you, with promptitude and certainty, to put an immediate termination to these difficulties. The horrors of such a warfare are too great to run any risk in its immediate termination. The subject is, therefore, committed entirely to your own discretion."

If he employed too few or too many troops, that fault was his, and not the fault of the Government. The following extract from this order will also show that he was equally unlimited in other means necessary for carrying on the war:

"Whatever expenditures may be rendered necessary you will please to direct, and the proper staff officers under your command will be furnished with such funds as may be required to meet them."

If there was either waste or want in his army, that fault was his own. His attention is particularly directed to the waste common in such armies as his, and he is exhorted to the strictest economy, as will appear from the following extract from the same general order, placing him in command:

"I have also to request that you will give the necessary orders for the preservation and accountability of public property. There is upon these occasions, too often, so great a waste, particularly where a militia force is brought into the field, that great circumspection should be used."

I have been thus particular in giving the orders of General Scott because they were substantially continued to all his successors, and because General Scott is the hero of the Whig party in this House; and, in order to sustain him, it has been deemed proper to assail not only the Government and the Secretary of War, but many others of the best and the most meritorious officers in the service. And yet, sir, when the Opposition in this House will take the pains to inquire minutely into the Florida operations, I feel confident that none of them will lose by a comparison

with those of General Scott, either in ability or economy, the want of which is charged upon all others.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. HUNT) has said that General Scott was ordered into the Florida service that he might be killed out of the way of a political rival. I will not degrade the country by answering such a charge, but turn that gentleman over to his own constituents. He has also said that the service was, in itself, too small a matter to give employment to so distinguished a general; and that a militia major, with five hundred men, ought to close the war in a month. I will only say, in reply to the latter part of this statement, that Major General Scott, with five thousand men such as the gentleman from New York, would not close it in five years, and General Scott will not thank the gentleman from New York for placing him in so false a position; for it will be seen from the official report that General Scott, who, I have shown, had unlimited control of men and measures to carry on this war, had actually in the field 4,763 men, after leaving a sufficiency to garrison his various posts, and this number is, no doubt, largely over an average of the forces employed during the war. One word as to the indignity said to be offered to General Scott by placing him on so petty a service. Whenever a general has become too dignified to serve his country in open war of any kind, particularly when it is the only war then going on, it would seem to me that the country had but little farther use for his services; and I feel assured that General Scott will not thank the gentleman from New York for placing him in this position. I am certain he would never assume such a one for himself. Having answered the gentleman from New York thus far, I will proceed with the reasons assigned by General Scott, in his defence before the court of inquiry, why he failed to end the Seminole war in 1836, so far only as those reasons are calculated to operate unjustly on the Government and upon his brother officers. I will take occasion to say, that I have no doubt that General Scott did all in his power to end the war, and so the court of inquiry expressly found. Whether he pursued the best measures to achieve that end, is a matter on which there is a great diversity of opinion.

The 2d cause is, "the unexpected intrusion of General Gaines." This was not an act of the Government, and was, no doubt, induced, on the part of General Gaines, by the most patriotic feeling. His movement was made soon after the defeat of Major Dade, and when much consternation and alarm prevailed throughout the South; for it was strongly apprehended that the Creeks would unite with the Seminoles, and that the war would become a general one. It is known to this committee, that General Gaines entered the Indian country with about one thousand Louisiana volunteers and regulars; that he found the great body of the Indians on the Withlacoochie; had several skirmishes with them; fortified his camp, and sent an express on the 28th, and another on the 29th of February, with letters directed to General Clinch, or the officer commanding at Fort Draue, informing him that his camp was surrounded by about 1,500 Indians, and asking a reinforcement and provisions, saying, at the same time, that he would make no sortie or attack on the Indians until he received an answer; and expressing an opinion that a combined operation might close this war. Gen. Clinch forwarded this letter to General Scott, then at Picolata, where it reached on the 1st day of March at daylight. I will extract a single sentence from his reply to Clinch, which will show the spirit in which he received it:

"Even if you had sufficient stores on hand, and means of transportation, I should, under the circumstances, command you to send no subsistence to him, unless to prevent starvation; but you have neither. Let him, therefore, in time, extricate himself from the embarrassment he has placed himself in, by marching upon Volusia, where, I have no reason to doubt, that 20,000 rations, sent there on the 27th ultimo, have safely arrived. As he appears to have a retreat open to him, or is in no peril to prevent his taking that step, you will, of course, make no detachment or move to join him."

Clinch, however, disobeyed the order, and joined Gaines on the 6th of March, with about 500 men and provisions. He found the Indians still there, and in the act of making a treaty, which was broken up by his firing on them. Why did not General Scott send all the forces he could collect to the aid of General Gaines, is an inquiry often made; and there has been much speculation as to what would have been the result of such a co-operation. The reply of Scott, above referred to, gives us some reason to fear that the private griefs of these gentlemen have been permitted to mingle with their public duties. It is a matter of much regret that these gallant men, who won their laurels and shed their blood on the same battlefield, should have been, for the last fifteen years, at a continual war, growing out of a question of rank, which was finally settled by Mr. Adams, somewhat in the style which the lion settled the dispute among the beasts, not by taking the command of the army himself, to which they both aspired, but by giving it to General Macomb. It may be true that General Gaines, in some degree, interfered with the plan on which General Scott intended to prosecute his campaign; or even that he defeated that plan. If so, it was twice defeated; for it certainly defeated itself, when General Scott attempted to carry it into execution. What was that famous plan, to which its author adhered with such pertinacity? It was to operate on a base line of about one hundred and thirty miles in length, terminating at Tampa Bay and Fort Drane, and to advance into an unexplored and distant Indian country, and, withal, the most difficult in the world, in three heavy columns, from those two points and Volusia; and relying for success on the mutual co-operation of these columns. The consequence was, that, after a ten days' march in the swamps and hammocks, they all returned to Tampa Bay, without ever having seen each other, although it is said that some of the columns heard the cannon of others. No doubt the Indians did the same thing, and moved off accordingly. To dismiss this subject, so far as General Gaines is connected with it, I will only add the opinion of Clinch, who was a witness before the court of inquiry, and who says, in speaking of the troops of Gaines, "I thought, myself, that the addition of those troops strengthened the column I commanded very much; but I believe the troop composing the right wing, independent of that number, could have performed the rout they did. It was rendered stronger than was originally the intention of General Scott. I, myself, think they were an acquisition, as they were experienced regulars, and gallant and efficient volunteers from Louisiana." Although many think General Scott would have ended the war, by a prompt and hearty co-operation with General Gaines; and although I regret extremely he did not attempt it, yet I feel bound to say, that I think it by no means probable; for every subsequent attempt to bring these Indians to a general battle, proves that they will fight only when it suits them, and that is when it does not suit us: when they choose to retire, they cannot be overtaken.

General Scott assigns several other reasons for the failure of his campaign, which I will briefly notice, as they are calculated to effect the administration, as well as the military character of General Jackson. One

is, that his orders were imperative "to reduce the enemy to unconditional submission." And this the General construes to mean, "to hold no parley, no negotiation; not even to say, as the price of surrender, that kind treatment might be expected," &c. The above extract from General Scott's defence goes to prove the excited state of his mind at the time; for no man in his sober senses could ever construe such an order to mean that a conquered enemy, or one offering to surrender, should not receive kind treatment. That he did not so act upon it, is manifest from the fact that almost the only time he ever had a glimpse of the Indians, he sent them a white flag, inviting a parley; and the Indians promised to meet him the next morning, but bad dreams, or some other cause, prevented them; for in the morning they were all missing. In fact, sir, had I not been told otherwise, I should have thought that the main object of all the display of his three great columns, and their thundering and drumming, was, in part, designed to convince the Indians that resistance would be folly, and they had better surrender at once. But General Scott assigns as a reason why he kept his army so long in large masses, that General Jackson "never detached against Indians," and gives some cramped expression of his, as proven by Colonel Lindsay, on which to establish it as an iron rule of General Jackson's, never to detach in an Indian country (which is certainly not correct), and then says "the court will please bear in mind the official relation that subsisted in January, 1836, between General Jackson, Colonel Lindsay, and myself." If we are to understand from this, that he considered himself bound to follow a supposed rule of General Jackson's, because he was his official superior, I will only say that the same relation existed between them after a ten days' campaign, when he admits that he began to detach freely. This same official relation certainly existed on the 2d of April, only seven days after General Scott commenced his campaign, when he detached Major Cooper, the gentleman at my right, with 340 men, to locate himself in the heart of the Indian country, for what purpose it is hard to say, unless it was to prove to the world that a Georgia major, with such a force, could hold in check an enemy which had compelled General Gaines to fortify and ask for help. And this, sir, he did in most gallant style for the space of 14 days, when he also was relieved by General Clinch, who seems to have been a kind of general helper on all such occasions. The only other reason assigned by General Scott why he did not conquer the Indians, on which I shall comment, is this, "insufficiency of hard bread and bacon." He admits, however, that he had a full supply of flour and pork. I think my friend from Louisiana (Judge CHINN) could tell us of an army, under the command of General Winchester in the last war, who, for a space near twice as long as General Scott's whole campaign, had no bread of any kind, and not flour enough to thicken their soup; and when their soup was made, it had not a greasy spot upon it. General Scott's campaign ended in the spring of 1836, without achieving any thing of moment. Although I am inclined to think he is not well calculated for Indian fighting, yet I do not doubt, in the slightest degree, that he is in every way worthy of the high character he possesses as a soldier and a commander. I only regret that his, and the course of his friends in relation to other officers, certainly his equal in every point of view, has compelled me to say much more of General Scott than I could otherwise permit myself to do. There is, however, one important transaction in his campaign that I would like to hear

his friends explain; and that is, why he left the Withlacoochie, where he found part, and where it is now certain the great body of the Indians then were, with his own column of 1,963 men and eight days' rations, without having examined one fourth part of the cover in which they have been found on so many occasions? It is certain he left Fort Drane on the 26th of March, with 18 rations, and arrived at Tampa, on his return, on the 10th of April.

General Call succeeded to the command of the Florida army some time in July, 1836. He is the only commander of that army whose previous services and standing at the time of his appointment, did not, in the estimation of the community, fully entitle him to the office; and yet, he had probably been in as many battles as any one of them, and seen as much service as most of them. He was with General Jackson in the Indian war of 1812, with him at Pensacola in 1814, at New Orleans in 1815, and the Seminole campaign of 1818; and he had resided nearly 20 years in Florida, and knew more of the Indians and the country than almost any man in it. But it is said he was also with General Clinch in the battle of the Withlacoochie on the 31st of December, 1835, in command of the Florida militia; and, from the general report of that battle, it is strongly insinuated that both he and his Floridians lost credit, if they had any to lose. That is all true. The only question is, whether that *report* is true. I have never seen the official report of that battle made to the commander-in-chief by General Clinch, and have purposely avoided saying any thing in relation to the battle itself, that I might present, in a single view, what I had to say of General Call. The following extract from the report of General Macomb, furnishes the charge made against General Call and the Florida troops:

"On the 29th of December, General Clinch, with six companies of regular troops, amounting to about two hundred men, proceeded from Fort King toward the Withlacoochie, to attack the Seminoles, who were in force on the left bank of that river. In this expedition he was joined by Governor Call, with between four hundred and five hundred volunteers of Florida.

"On the 31st of December, General Clinch, with the regular troops under his command, crossed the Withlacoochie. He was here attacked by a large body of Indians, and, after a spirited engagement, the Indians were finally defeated, and fled into the hammocks. In this affair, it will appear that the regular troops bore the brunt of the action. Out of the two hundred troops who crossed the river with General Clinch, fifty-seven were killed or wounded, including four officers. Of the four or five hundred volunteers who had joined General Clinch with a view of aiding in subduing the Indians, only twenty-seven men and three officers took part in the action. Why so many remained out of the action, is not explained. Had the same zeal and bravery been displayed by the whole force as was evinced by the regular troops, there is little doubt but that the war would have been terminated with the battle of the Withlacoochie."

General Call, in a letter to General Macomb, gives the most conclusive reasons why so few of the Florida troops were engaged. I will read the following extract from that letter:

"On our arrival, the army was suddenly brought to a halt; and we were greatly surprised at finding a deep and rapid river, presenting a most formidable impediment to our farther advance into the country, instead of a fordable stream over which we might pass with scarce any delay, which the information of our guides had led us to expect. On the opposite side an Indian canoe was discovered, and was brought across by two men who swam over for it. The regulars immediately commenced crossing; and, although they only amounted to about two hundred and sixty, it was nearly noon before they had effected the passage. In the meantime, the volunteers had been engaged in driving over their horses; and a raft of green poles had been constructed, on which some of the saddles were carried over; but it was so heavy, and sunk so deep in the water, that it was of but very little service. So soon as the regulars were over, the volunteers commenced crossing in the canoe, which, under the best management, would carry only from five to seven persons, two of whom were generally found necessary to carry the boat back again; and it required bailing every trip, to prevent it filling

with water. It is to be remembered that the volunteers had to take their saddles and saddle-bags with them in the canoe; and therefore could not cross with the same rapidity as the regulars, who marched in with their knapsacks on their backs. When the action commenced, not more than thirty or forty of the volunteers had crossed the river, of whom a large number were officers. Some of them had swam over; and being unable to carry their guns with them, were in a defenceless situation until supplied from the opposite side. They marched boldly into the fight, and behaved with as much intrepidity as any men on that field. They formed a line extending from the river bank nearly to the left flank of the regulars; and it was owing to their position, and the gallantry with which they fought, that the regulars were not surrounded and cut off by the enemy. During the fight, the volunteers continued to cross as fast as possible, and join in the action. Many attempted to swim the river; but, in every instance, I believe, it was found impossible to cross in that manner without getting their arms wet, and their ammunition destroyed. At one time I ordered the whole force to mount and charge the river; but it was found impracticable, from the cause just mentioned, and the order was countermanded. Some swam nearly over, carrying their guns above the water; but, from exhaustion, were compelled to drop them."

On the reception of General Call's letter, from which the above extract is made, General Macomb returned the following letter :

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, Washington, August 21, 1837.

"Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3d instant, on the subject of that part of my annual report made to the Secretary of War last year, which gives an account of the operations of the army in Florida against the Seminoles, especially in reference to the affair of the Withlacoochie; in which report, you think that injustice has been done to the Florida volunteers then under your command.

"The report to which you allude was based on the official information which had been received by me; and had I been furnished with so detailed a statement of the affair of the 31st December, 1835, with the explanations, as that which you now present in the communication above referred to, it would have afforded me the greatest satisfaction to have reiterated the praise you bestow on the Florida volunteers who followed you on that occasion to the banks of the Withlacoochie. It was far from any intention on my part to do injustice to the patriotic volunteers who so promptly rallied under your standard on the signal of danger; but, as before observed, I had no means of stating why they did not cross the river at the moment of attack on the regulars, who were in position on its opposite bank. I will cause your communication to be put on file in the Adjutant General's office, and besides, with this letter, give it publicity through the public prints, that the world may, by means of your statement, be made more fully acquainted with the part the Florida volunteers took in the battle of the Withlacoochie.

"With respectful considerations, I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"ALEX. MACOMB,

Major General, commanding in chief.

"To his Excellency R. K. CALL, Governor of Florida."

Why is it that General Clinch, in his original report, failed to give an explanation so essential to the reputation of a brother-soldier? And why is it that he has permitted the letter of General Call, and the answer of General Macomb, to be spread before the world for the last three years, without notice?

It gives me much pleasure, Mr. Chairman, to say that the battle of the 31st of December, 1836, fought mainly by the command of General Clinch, was one of much gallantry, and that the commanding general, on that occasion, plucked the only laurels that have ever been won in Florida, as far as the reputation of a soldier depends upon the plaudits of the world. I am only at a loss to know why he has failed to do justice to a man quite as brave as himself—yes, sir, as brave as any man.

Mr. Chairman, the delicate attitude in which the conduct of General Call is left by the different reports made of this battle, induces me to relate an anecdote of that gentleman, which, I think, will convince every one that he never intentionally kept out of a battle when duty required him to be in it. In the night fight at New Orleans, on the 28th of December, 1814, there were some moments of confusion, and great peril. At one time, it was ascertained that some of our friends were firing on the

rear of the 44th regiment, to which Call (then a lieutenant) belonged: at the same moment, a report prevailed that General Coffee, who had gone on in advance, was firing on its front. Sir, it was one of those moments which leaves a burning spot upon the memory for ever—one in which all that brave men can do, is to perish without a struggle. At this momentous crisis, Lieutenant Call sprang from the ranks, and advanced in the face of a heavy fire, until he saw, by the flash of their own guns, the uniform of the British soldiers, which enabled the 44th, by forcing the front, to get clear of the fire in the rear. Sir, I repeat it, that man never shunned a battle. Of all the generals who have commanded in Florida, there is no one who has more just cause of complaint than General Call, and yet I know that no wrong was intended him.

Some time about the 10th of October, he commenced his march to the Indian country, with about thirteen hundred men, most of them from Tennessee; and General Jackson, then President, believed that army could and would conquer all the Indians in the country. General Call was in high spirits, and thought to close the war in a short time, as all others have thought who have been in command there, both before and since; but like all others, he was disappointed. This same Withlacoochie again rolled its dark, deep waters between him and the foe; and after a skirmish across it, he was compelled to return to Fort Drane, after going to a point at which he had previously arranged for the establishing of a depot of provisions, but which had failed by the sinking of a steamboat at the mouth of the Withlacoochie. The report of this campaign reached General Jackson in a most unfavorable form, and he at once superseded General Call in the command. In the meantime, General Call returned, and fought three battles, in all of which he acquitted himself much to his credit, and to the satisfaction of the President. In his different operations in Florida his army killed fifty-six Indians.

The treatment received by General Call shows conclusively that General Jackson did not in the slightest degree permit his feelings to interfere with his duty, for there were few men in the world he prized higher than General Call; and finally justice was done him.

I will conclude what I have to say of General Call by reading an extract of a letter to the War Department from General Jesup, by whom he was superseded:

"As an act of justice to Governor Call, I take occasion to say (and I stake my professional reputation on the correctness of the remark) that no man could, under the circumstances in which he was placed, have done more than he has done. He had the summer, it is said in the public prints, to prepare for a winter campaign; but he could not establish posts without force to defend them; and it is to be observed that he entered upon his command under circumstances of embarrassment, which did not exist when the campaign of last year commenced. He found the country exhausted, and not only all the positions occupied during the campaign abandoned, but the whole country, from the Suwanee to the Atlantic, except Tampa Bay and St. Augustine, occupied by the enemy. His plan of the campaign was admirable; but there were circumstances which he could not control that prevented its execution."

General Jesup assumed the command in Florida about the 4th of December, 1836. Exceptions have been taken by the gentlemen who have preceded me as to the manner in which he got into this command; this is a matter purely personal to himself and General Scott, in which I do not intend to intermeddle; the only important matter for this committee to know, is how he acquitted himself when the command was given to him. If we compare his success with that of others, there can be but one opinion on this point.

He was actively employed from the time he took the command, until he was relieved in July, 1838; and during that time he scoured the whole country from the Appalachicola to Cape Sable, embracing nearly six degrees of latitude. In his various campaigns, he captured and killed about twenty-four hundred Indians and negroes, computing those who surrendered voluntarily; in which number were embraced about six hundred warriors. His success was at least five times as great as all the other generals together, who have figured in this war; and that he acquitted himself to the entire satisfaction of the Government, if not the nation, will be perceived by the letter of the Secretary of War, which I will now read to the committee:

"DEPARTMENT OF WAR, July 7, 1838.

"SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 6th instant, containing a summary account of your operations in Florida. The department is aware of the obstacles to your complete success, presented by the face of the country, the nature of the climate, and the character of the enemy, and fully appreciates your untiring efforts to carry out all its views, and to remove the Seminoles to their new homes in the west. You have accomplished all that could be expected, under peculiar and difficult circumstances in which you were placed, from a zealous, active, and energetic officer; and, in withdrawing you from Florida, the department was actuated by no want of confidence in your zeal or ability to carry on the war to a successful issue, but from a belief that you might now return to the performance of the appropriate duties of your department, without injury to the public service.

"Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

"J. R. POINSETT.

"Major General THOMAS S. JESUP,
"Washington City."

Under such circumstances, it was but reasonable to hope that, on his return to his family, he might, after all his toils and dangers, have been permitted to rest in quiet. He did not ask for fame in this war; he expected none. He had, in more fortunate fields, and in better days of the republic, won reputation enough to satisfy the ambition of a moderate man—a reputation that those who are now trying to grind him into the earth, are bound to acknowledge, even through their gnashing teeth.

Like General Gaines, he had the misfortune to derange one of General Scott's splendid plans of an Indian campaign. True, he succeeded in seizing the Indians, and preventing a war with the Creek nation, but not on a scientific plan; and that has called down the heavy vengeance of General Scott's friends on this floor. I regret this attack, particularly, because it is made by a gentleman whose virtues and talents I hold in high esteem—I mean the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BIDDLE); but no consideration of this character shall prevent me from doing justice to a countryman and a friend. I will, however, attempt to do it with all the decorum which the circumstances of the case will permit. I regret that I did not hear many things that the gentleman said in his address to this committee. There were, however, several distinct charges of a highly dishonorable character, to which I will call the attention of the committee; and the first is, that, in the capture and detention of the celebrated chief Osceola, General Jesup disgraced our flag, and violated a law held sacred by the whole world, civilized and savage; and he read a most chaste and beautiful extract from a letter of General Jesup himself, to prove how eloquently even the perpetrator of so foul a deed could speak of the offence itself. I regret that I have not the extract before me; I would use it for a very different purpose; it would go far to prove that he who could utter such a sentiment, in such a way, could never be guilty of the infamy of the deed which he depicted. But to the truth of the charge. The circumstances of the case, as far as I

can understand them, seem to be these : Osceola was one of the chiefs who had signed the treaty in April, 1835, confirming the treaty of Payne's Landing, and the treaty at Fort Gibson, being the treaties by which the Seminoles agreed to exchange their lands and emigrate beyond the Mississippi. In violation of these treaties, he commenced the war in December of that year, by killing Charley Amathla, and forcing away Micanopy, the chief of the tribe, both of whom were friendly, and disposed to emigrate.

In relation to the violation of the flag, I condense the following statement from the report of General Jesup, called for by a resolution of the Senate, many of the important facts of which I have heard from General Call and others. While at Fort King, he was informed that some of the Indians wished to come in and hold a treaty with him. He informed them distinctly that he had no power to treat; that they had agreed to emigrate, and must go; that if they wished to come in for that purpose, to use a white flag, which would secure them while in the act of coming in. From the Indians by whom this communication was made, he then learned that Osceola was hostile to the emigration. The Indians began to come in accordingly, and, among the rest, Osceola; but, before the arrival of Osceola, however, General Jesup received the following information, on which he placed implicit reliance, and which was strengthened by the information he had before received, that Osceola was unfriendly. I give his own words :

"On the 20th, John Cavallo, a sub-chief, a hostage who had violated his parole in May of last year, came into St. Augustine with a message from Powell and Coe-Hajo, stating that they had encamped near the fort, and desired to see General Hernandez. Several negroes came in on the same day; from them I learned that the Indians had but a short time previous killed a white man; that they did not intend to leave the country; that they were desirous of obtaining powder and clothing; and, as some of the negroes expressed it, they had 'come for no good;' and that, when they set out for St. Augustine, a party of Miccasukeys and Tallahasseees had started from their camps for the Alachua frontier to steal horses and drive off cattle."

If this information was true, will any gentleman say that General Jesup was wrong in seizing a man who had brought on the war in the first instance by murder and deception, and in direct violation of a treaty signed by himself, merely because he covered his intended treachery by a flag allowed to him for the sole purpose of protecting him while in the act of coming in? Suppose he had reached the fort unmolested, and for the purpose of emigrating, what would have been the result? If I am correctly informed, the Indians were all, while in the act of preparing for emigration, supplied with rations, and so guarded as to prevent their returning to the woods. So he would have been substantially a prisoner the moment he reached the fort, if he had not been arrested on the way; but, in addition to this, General Jesup justified himself on the following grounds. He says :

"The Indians, by their chiefs, had surrendered to me by capitulation at Fort Dade, in March, 1837; and, in addition, Powell had, in May of that year, gone in to Lieutenant Colonel Harney, at Fort Mellon, and had received subsistence to take his band to Tampa Bay. Coe-Hajo had received subsistence for his band for the same purpose. The former, in violation of his plighted faith, not only failed to go in himself, but prevented Coe-Hajo, by force and threats, from fulfilling his engagement which he was attempting faithfully to do. He also attempted to kill Yoholo Hajo, an unarmed herald or messenger, whom, in a period of peace, I had sent to communicate with Coe Hajo and Nocose Yoholo."

"As I had informed the chiefs at Fort King that I would hold no communication with the Seminoles unless they should determine to emigrate; as I had permitted no Indian to come in for any other purpose but to remain; as they were all prisoners-of-war, or hostages, who had violated their parole; as many of them had violated the truce entered into at Fort King, by occupying the country east of the St. John, by allowing predatory parties to go to the frontier, and by killing at least one white man; and, as the white flag had been allowed for no other purpose than to enable them to communicate and come in without danger of attack from our

parties, it became my duty to secure them on being satisfied of the fact that they intended to return to their fastnesses. I accordingly required General Hernandez to seize them, and take them to St. Augustine; but, notwithstanding their character as prisoners and hostages who had violated their parole, and who, according to the laws of war, as recognised by civilized nations, had forfeited their lives, I directed that they should be treated with every kindness, and have every accommodation consistent with their security."

Now, sir, place this transaction on the worst footing that the circumstances will properly authorize, and what does it amount to; that in his zeal to serve his country in a matter involving the lives of many, and the peace of the nation, he has been possibly mistaken as to what his duty really required of him; for can any one believe for a moment that such a man as General Jesup would risk his fair fame in a transaction where he could gain nothing, had a doubt rested on his mind as to the propriety of the act? No, sir, he has done too much to elevate the flag of this nation in war, ever to tarnish it in peace or war. Again—the same gentleman has in one of General Jesup's letters, found something in praise of the regular army, and not very complimentary to the militia, a thing quite common with most of the officers of the army who have seen much service; and, after uniting these facts, he has come to the strange conclusion, that General Jesup has been guilty of protracting the Florida war, for the purpose of rendering a regular army necessary. I hope, sir, this is not designed to eke out Mr. Poinsett's army bill; I am certain it was not intended as an addition to that of General Harrison, although they are but twin-brothers.

If all the other officers of the Florida army had succeeded half as well in advancing that war, as General Jesup did in protracting it, the war would long since have ended.

I think the gentleman, however, got somewhat ashamed of this charge, as he concluded by saying he did not assert that it was true; he only thought it might be inferred from the facts. One word more as to what General Jesup said in dispraise of the militia. If the gentleman from Pennsylvania has read all his letters in the volume that he used before this committee, he will find this remarkable fact, that he (General Jesup) was so much more the favorite of these same militia than General Scott, that he became the mediator between them and that general, after he had so abused them, as to destroy his usefulness as the commander of the Florida army, which was mainly composed of militia.

The same gentleman has found another letter of General Jesup's, in which he spoke of the "huckstering policy of certain members of Congress." That the people will say many worse things of us than that, when we got home, I have no doubt. But the officers of the army and the people are different persons, and moreover there is a law of the land we are told, which makes it a high offence in an officer of the army, to speak in terms disrespectful of Congress. That is true, sir, and that consideration should have restrained the gentleman when he was pouring out the hot vials of his wrath, for the third time, on the naked head of one who cannot retaliate without a breach of law.

I regret extremely that I have been compelled to say as much on so unpleasant a subject, but as the speech of the gentleman from Pennsylvania, was mainly an attack upon General Jesup, I could not say less.

Gen. Taylor succeeded Gen. Jesup in the command, and as I have heard no complaint against him, I presume there is none. Fortunately for himself, sir, he is a Whig, and fortunately for the country he is a soldier of the highest order; and if age has not tamed him too much, he is an officer well calculated for the service in which he has been engaged. He is now relieved from

that service, and I understand that the army under his command has killed about one hundred and fifty Indians, during his many and arduous campaigns. Such in part, sir, have been the results of the war in Florida, and yet it is not ended; and now I ask emphatically whose is the fault? Not the Government's, for I repeat it, the best means of the country have been lavished on it; nor do I believe there has been either neglect or cowardice on the part of the army. True, they have won but few victories, which deserve the name, and still fewer laurels; but does this prove that they have not at all times performed all their duties promptly and to the best of their ability. It is not in the battle alone that the soldier is tried. Many a bold heart that has beat more proudly at each successive blast of the trumpet, has faltered and failed on the weary march. Toil and sickness, and cold and hunger, watching with the stars and rising and marching with the sun, threading brakes, and wading swamps day after day and month after month, where nothing but dishonor is to be expected, better prove a soldier's worth than twenty battles, for they demand and call out his highest virtues, his fortitude and his patriotism. Still I hear a party in this House again and again exclaim, "You have all the means of this Government in your hands; and we demand of you why this war is not ended." Take back three fourths of the means that have been constantly employed, and produce the foe, and, my word for it, the war will be ended in an hour; but, sir, unless the enemy can be found, how idle is your command to conquer him; you had as well bid your army smooth down the ruffled mane of the deep, or bind the restless wings of the wind, or pluck a star from the coronal of night, as conquer a foe that they cannot find. Can you do it, gentlemen? But that I fear Florida might want protection in the meantime, I should like to see this war committed to your charge. I should like to see you and all such as you wading and toiling through the Florida swamps, just long enough to teach you that patriotism and numbers cannot always command success.

I should like particularly well, sir, to see my little friend from Indiana, who has doggerelized this war in such fine style, returning safely from a six months' campaign, with his cheek a little embrowned with toil, and his head a little better filled with discretion and experience, and then hear him give his account of a Florida campaign. Not, sir from his *chamber-window*, nor in *dishabille at night*, but in true old soldier style, in a tavern-hall, with his knapsack thrown off and a bottle before him. I think he would then be much better qualified to give us an account of the "remains of the Florida war." I think he would then tell us that hundreds have fallen in open battle; that many more have sunk under the accumulated weight of sickness and fatigue; that many have returned wearing the salor of disease upon their cheeks, and the quickened seeds of death within their hearts, and that thousands yet remain to follow in their footsteps to be overtaken by their fate. I think, sir, he would not a second time break an idle jest at the expense of that ill-fated army, between the very ribs of death. I say to all who believe this war can be ended with ease, go and learn your folly and quit swaggering about it. If you can end it and fail to do so, I tell you to your beads, you have not one drop of patriot blood in your veins.

I proceed, in the next place, sir, to examine the Senate bill for the armed occupation of Florida, as the one designed for the permanent defence of the country; and the only one, in my opinion, which will end this war. But, before I proceed to examine its provisions, I will say a word or two as to the plan of those who oppose it. Among them are many for whose

opinions I have the highest respect; and at their head I place General Taylor. It is said his plan is to cover the country with troops, and thereby put an end to this war at once. This is easily said, but difficult to be done. The Indian territory, as I understand it, contains about 45,000 square miles; and about one third of it is composed of almost impervious hammocks, swamps, and everglades, and interspersed with many ponds and lakes. How, sir, is such a country to be covered with troops? And how are the Indians to be dislodged from it, or conquered in it? Send an army with a man to every square mile; let it pass over every acre of ground; and still, from the character of the country, each acre may contain a dozen lurking savages; for I am told there are many places into which no human eye can pierce ten feet. A large army will always announce its own advance; and never move or halt, but under the keen eye of an Indian scout, who, in a few hours after nightfall, will convey intelligence of its movements farther than such an army has travelled in the preceding day, or can travel in the next. Such an army, acting as such, never will find an Indian, unless he wishes to be found; and, should it chance to stumble on him, it will be only to see and lose sight of him. If he is pursued, it will be a contest between a blood horse and a terrapin. But the plan, of course, will be to divide this army into small bodies. Subdivide it a hundred fold; beat and explore a hundred of these brakes and hammocks at once; and, still, there are a thousand others, where the Indian may conceal himself with equal safety. While you are beating the bushes in one, he is in quiet possession of the next, or picking up your stragglers in the rear; and, when your search is completed, and you have abandoned it, he, as a matter of course, takes quiet possession. Moreover, sir, such an army, thus divided, and in such a country, could not be provisioned. The Indians know this fact, and they also know that no sensible nation will long keep such an army in vain pursuit; and their plan will, of course, be, what it ever has been, to hide and dodge from swamp to swamp until our troops, worn down with disease and fatigue, and hopeless of success, shall have been withdrawn from the field. Then, sir, they will return to their old haunts, to commence their work of murder and devastation anew. It is useless, however, to predicate opposition to this bill on such premises as these. Neither party in this House is prepared to vote for an army of one-fourth the size of that of which I have spoken, nor is General Taylor to be understood as recommending such a one. It was both natural and proper, while he was in the command of the Florida army, that he should want as many troops as he could use with any hope of success. But, sir, if those Indians are resolved to defend the country to the last, as I am induced to believe they have, and the country contains within itself the spontaneous means of support that I am informed it does, I feel well convinced, in my own mind, that the ordinary course and means of war will be found unavailing to end it in any reasonable time.

How, then, I am asked, is it to be closed, or is it never to be ended? Yes, sir, I trust it is, but not in a day. It is to be the work of time, and to be performed by the hands of a peculiar race of men: a race once common in the west, but one which, from the disuse of the rifle, and long habits of peace, is now nearly extinct—a race, sir, familiar with the unwritten science of Indian warfare; with frames capable of enduring its hardships and privations, and courage to turn it against the savage in his

own domain. In order to do this, he must become a tenant of that domain, and grow familiar with all its minute localities. What is the object of the bill now under consideration? It is designed to hold out inducements to the boldest spirits of the land, to occupy that country which is the theatre of the war, and to commence this necessary training. At the very threshold we are met with the usual objection of the times, that it will be a prodigal waste of public money. In matters of this kind, sir, I confess that I am by no means a rigid economist. I would defend the country at any price; nay, sir, bankrupt posterity for a hundred years to come, to save the lives of our citizens; it is the best use of a nation's wealth, and a tax that the people are proud to pay, although some of those who represent them may slander them by doubting it.

But, sir, I deny that it will be an extravagant plan; my only fear is, that the inducements held out to settlers will prove insufficient; if in the end, however, they should turn out to be ample, with me it will never be a source of regret; for, in my estimation, there is no man half so well entitled to a full and fair portion of the public domain, as he who has perilled his life in its conquest or defence. If one-half of the number contemplated by this bill, can be induced to settle within the limits and on the conditions proposed, I shall have no apprehension of its complete success; and, if they do not, why, nothing will be lost. It has been urged against the bill, that the settlers, when there, are required to do nothing, and are to be fed for one year in the bargain. Unless the feeding of our army has been greatly improved since I was in the habit of drawing rations, I fear it will prove a very slight temptation, to lure men from the haunts of civilization, and induce them to become residents of the wilderness, where they have nothing to expect but hardship and danger. None will go but men of courage and enterprise, and the idea that such men will remain idle, with arms in their hands, and the foe within their reach, is a reflection upon the character of the country refuted by every leaf and line of its history. It must also be borne in mind, that the settler is to derive no kind of advantage from his settlement until the war is ended; and if he is to be acted on by interest alone, that alone will prompt him to lend all his energies to bring it to a close. But, sir, had they no interest at stake, place such a body of men in such a situation, with arms in their hands, and let one cry of murder reach their ears, and I defy you to keep them from the contest. You had as well tell me that the passengers in a sinking ship would not lend their aid to keep it above the waves, because they were not part of the regular crew.

Gentlemen who have argued this question in the other House, and some who have argued in advance here, have been brushing up their classic lore, and the experience of distant countries and past ages has been invoked to our aid. We have been pointed to the wars of the Pontine marshes, of the Scythians, and the Maroons, as affording lights and guides. This, sir, is a severe satire on the age and the country in which we live. There is, unfortunately, a proneness but too prevalent among us to slight and under-rate whatever is properly and peculiarly American, and to give a fictitious value to every thing that may be had for picking up beyond the seas, and not worth even that trouble. We have had a century of Indian wars of our own, and, to me, there is nothing half so much like an Indian war as a war with Indians. To close up such a volume of experience, and to grope our way into the dark ages, and search among the missile-wars of

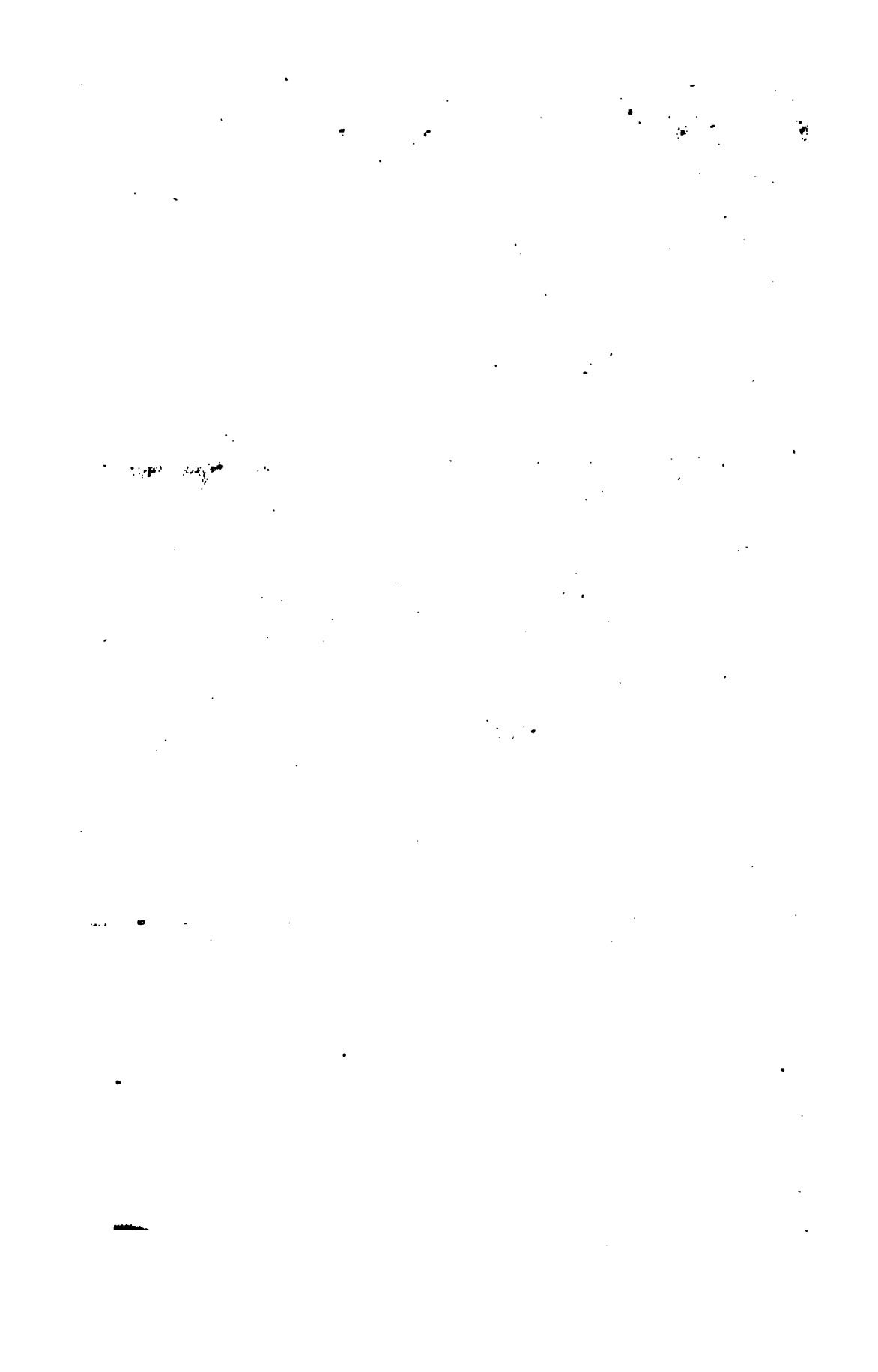
other countries for examples to conduct a rifle-war with the American Indians of this day, is to turn our backs upon the full blaze of the tropic sun, and crawl into Symmes's polar world in search of light.

But, sir, it is urged that this is a most peculiar war; that all former wars have had an end, but this bids fair to be eternal. It is certainly true that all our former wars have had an end, but it is equally true that many of them were even longer than this, and none ever carried on in such a country; and it is also true that they were all waged at a most prodigal waste of blood, and ended mainly by the very means proposed in this bill—by sending the rifle and the plough together. True, sir, many a strong hand that held that plough fell nerveless from its task, and the fresh furrow was often filled with the warm blood of him who made it; but still the work went on; more rifles came to guard, and more fortunate hands to hold it. How was Kentucky settled? How was the savage conquered in the entire west? By the very means proposed in this bill—by holding out inducements to the actual settler. True, sir, Virginia gave no lands to the first settlers in Kentucky, but she sold them so low as to make it tantamount to a gift; and the rich lands of Kentucky were of themselves inducement enough to enlist the enterprise of the older States in rescuing such a land from the savage marauder. But let us inquire for a moment into the particular manner in which this country was settled. Kentucky was first approached by the route of the Cumberland gap, and the first settlements made at Boonesborough and Harpordsburg. Block-houses and slight stockades were immediately erected, sufficient to afford temporary cover and protection to the different families of the emigrants; as new settlers came, they were increased in size and number, and so located as to afford mutual assistance and protection; and they soon extended, in a circular line, from Maysville to Louisville, leaving the Ohio between these two points, and all the country north of this line an entire wilderness, and the theatre of a bloody strife.

Beyond this cordon of stations an Indian was rarely known to venture, and still more rarely suffered to return. This chain was daily drawn closer, and the theatre of war lessened, as new block-houses were advanced into the contested field. The Indians, in the end, were fairly crowded out, and the whole country occupied. Upon establishing one of those posts, the first thing to be done was to clear and plant the ground in the immediate vicinity of the station, and to extend those clearings as fast as prudence would permit. In the meantime, the silent scout commenced his reconnoissance, and the adjacent country was explored. The young and active followed in his footsteps, venturing, daily, deeper and deeper in the woods. As their knowledge of the country and their skill with the rifle increased, confidence in themselves and the spirit of enterprise grew upon them; and, no longer content with the security of the block-house, they learned to mark his footprints, and trace the Indian to his secret lair. The savage soon began to feel that he had an equal in the white, and found him a superior in the end. The war that ensued was mainly one of small parties, often a combat of single individuals, and of course calling out all the courage, skill, and prowess, of the combatants, and giving to after-times many a wild and bloody legend, where though truth may be often lost in fiction—fiction will as often fall short of truth.

Occasionally these stations were surrounded by large parties of Indians, and the settlers cut off from the woods, their chief means of subsistence. Relief, or speedy famine, was then the inevitable fate of all within. And

how was that relief to come? One only way, sir. That deadly living circle must be passed! That wily foe must be outwiled. And often, in the middle of the night, with no eye upon him but the eye of God, and perhaps the keen eye of the foe, the hunter dressed him in his Indian garb, and stole forth silent as the spirit of the hour. Sometimes he failed; and his story lives in the traditions of the times. Often, the very boldness of the attempt insured its success, and daylight found him threading the vast and gloomy woods alone. Would, sir, I could draw you a picture of this man; for in doing so, I would but give you a portrait of my own countrymen, at the period of which I am speaking. I would paint him out to you in the gray mist of the dawn, when he has paused to make his first reconnoissance, with his trusty rifle in his hand, and standing by a tree not larger than himself, still doubtful of his fate, and yet prepared to meet whatever may betide. Every nerve and every muscle braced, all his senses roused, and waiting on his judgment and his will; his keen and practised eye roving quickly, not hurriedly, around, and often resting on the route he had come, to see if any dared follow on his track, and saying in language stronger than words, it was a dangerous way for any single man to tread. Such men as these are not to be found in every land, and no where but with much and severe discipline. From such the Indian soon turned away, but was not permitted to depart alone; his footprint in the dew was the signal for pursuit, and he who had been hunting others, had now in turn to run for life. Do not imagine they intended to catch him. There was then no reward for catching Indian warriors with loaded rifles in their hands. The world had not yet become so Christianized as to think it wrong to kill in battle or pursuit, one whose hands were reeking with Christian blood of every age and sex. Nor was it thought either humane or politic to throw away the lives of our bold backwoods soldiery, in vain attempts to capture an Indian warrior, whose education and religion united in teaching him to die with his weapons in his hands, and not with fetters on his arms—one who, even when wounded, and all hopes of escape at an end, would send his last bullet to the heart of any one who would offer him life on condition of surrender, and die in the proud belief that such an act would place him at the head of his warrior tribe in another world, where he might commence his trade of death anew. In those days of primitive simplicity, it was thought no disgrace to kill an Indian enemy; it was even thought an act of merit. Had a dog, sir, even a bloodhound, have killed an Indian in those simple days, I do not think he would have been hung for it. I am certain he would not while Scott or Shelby held the pardoning power. Indian fighters then ranked among the patriots of the land, for that land had none but patriots in it. Those days must come back again, sir, or the Indians will thrash you out.





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